

Dr. Stokes Case

During April 2007, Dr. Robert W. Stokes, a dermatologist who had offices in Grand Rapids and Greenville, was tried in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan on charges of health care fraud. During the investigation, federal agents interviewed three employees of Dr. Stokes who stated that he may have used medical instruments, designed and intended to be used on a single patient, on multiple patients. Although Dr. Stokes may have placed the instruments in a sterilizing solution proven to be effective against viruses before they were used on another patient, this is not standardized medical practice for instruments that penetrate the skin. Statements indicated that more traditional sterilization methods stopped approximately 13 years ago (1994). Reused medical instruments include scalpels, gloves, syringes, and suture materials. Since the disclosure of this information, Dr. Stokes' office has been closed.



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The Kent County Health Department has concluded that Dr. Stokes' medical practices have put his patients at increased risk of coming into contact with viruses that can be transmitted through blood or body fluids. These viruses include:

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

A risk assessment performed by the Kent County Health Department indicates that the chance of acquiring these infections through procedures performed by Dr. Stokes is very slight. However, because the risk is not zero and infected individuals potentially have no symptoms, **KCHD recommends that all patients of Dr. Stokes visit their health care providers to determine if testing for these viruses should be performed.**

The following resources are intended to provide information on HBV, HCV, and HIV. If you are a patient of Dr. Stokes' and require additional information or do not have a primary care physician through which you can be tested, call the Kent County Health Department at 616-632-7260, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays, from 8:15 am – 5:00 pm beginning Thursday, November 15, 2007.

Additional Information:

- [Copy of Letter Sent to Patients](#)
- [Health Alert to Health Care Providers](#)
- [U.S. Attorney's Indictment](#)
- December 27th News Release: [Kent County Health Department to Notify Additional Patients of Potential Risks](#)

KCHD Fact Sheets

- [Blood Borne Pathogens Fact Sheet](#)
- [Hepatitis B Fact Sheet](#)
- [Hepatitis C Fact Sheet](#)
- [Hepatitis Resource Guide](#)

Information from CDC

Hepatitis B

